

Statement from Congressman Ron Kind
Supporting H.R. 1
January 9, 2007

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1, legislation to fully implement the remaining recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. I am pleased the new House leadership has made this one of the first major pieces of legislation debated in the 110th Congress.

In the five years since the appalling acts of September 11th, our country has been fighting terrorism to protect America and our friends and allies. On July 22, 2004, the independent and bipartisan 9/11 Commission provided to Congress and the American public 41 recommendations to improve homeland security.

At the end of the 108th Congress, legislation was passed and signed into law that implemented some of the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. I was disappointed that the bill did not implement all of the Commission's recommendations. That is why I am pleased to support the bill before us today which includes all of the remaining recommendations.

One of the most important subjects the bill addresses is how the U.S. government interacts with the Arab and Muslim world. The United States must extend our pre-emptive strategy to include winning the hearts and minds in the developing world; I believe this can be achieved through education reform. H.R. 1 would significantly enhance the International Arab and Muslim Youth Opportunity Fund, which is designed to improve educational opportunities for these youth, by calling for greater funding and outlining specific purposes for the fund.

Education reform in the Arab and Muslim world is of great importance to me. In fact during the 109th Congress I introduced the Universal Education Act to reform education in the developing world. Despite strong evidence that education can make nations more prosperous, healthy, stable, and democratic, the total amount spent each year on foreign aid directed at education could not even build 20 American high schools. If one of our strategic goals is to defeat terrorism around the world, we need to drastically increase our foreign aid spending, and to help developing nations improve their education systems.

Additionally, the bill before us improves the capabilities of the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center by authorizing additional funding and hiring intelligence analysts experienced in the fields of human trafficking and terrorist travel. Cutting off the ability for terrorist to leave their country of origin is a first good step to stopping another attack on U.S. soil.

Further, the legislation strengthens several federal non-proliferation initiatives so that weapons of mass destruction (WMD) do not fall into the hands of terrorists. Moreover, H.R. 1 would enact the Nuclear Black Market Counter-Terrorism Act. This bill requires the president to impose sanctions on any foreign person who trades nuclear enrichment technology to a non-nuclear weapons state or provides items that contribute to the development of a nuclear weapon by a non-nuclear weapons state or any foreign person. This action sends a clear message to would be terrorists that if they do attempt to arm themselves there will be serious consequences.

I praise the Commission for its excellent work, leadership, patriotism, and service to our country. We owe it to the families of the victims of 9/11 and to the citizens of our country to use the report's recommendations to make certain such attacks never happen again.

Again, I would like to congratulate and thank the House leadership for making one of the first tasks of the 110th Congress implementing the wise reforms suggested by the 9/11 Commission. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on H.R. 1.

Thank you Madam Speaker, I yield back the remainder of my time.